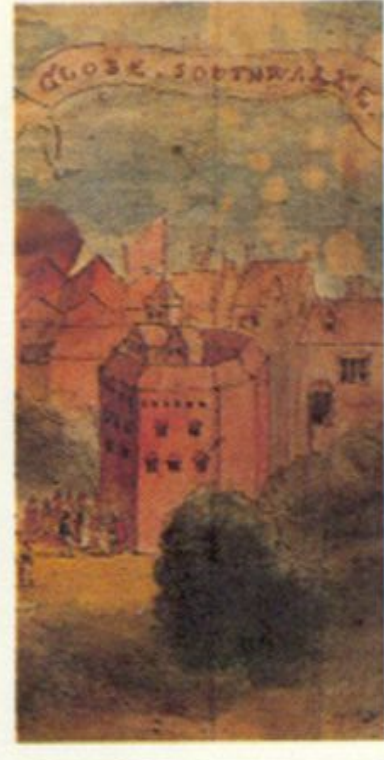






A Series of 50 Cards

5. James I: 1603-1625

James I, the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, succeeded Elizabeth I as monarch. He believed firmly that God appointed monarchs to rule with absolute power. He was unable to live up to this belief. He was very extravagant, spending huge sums on food, drink and entertainment, and in gifts for his favourites and family. He was forced to ask Parliament for money to rule his kingdom and conduct foreign affairs. They were unwilling to cooperate, and he lacked Elizabeth's tactful, persuasive approach. He was a nervous, undignified man, much given to coarse behaviour and speech. He wore padded clothes for fear of assassins. Even his funeral was described as 'very confused and disorderly'.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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4. The Globe Theatre

The Globe witnessed the golden years of English theatre, showing not only Shakespeare's greatest plays but also works by Marlowe and Ben Jonson. It was constructed in 1599 by London's foremost company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, who had dismantled their theatre in Shoreditch and carried the beams across the frozen Thames to a new site at Bankside. The name was probably derived from its circular shape and its emblem showing Hercules supporting the globe. The Latin motto 'ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE' was inscribed above. Shakespeare was a leading actor, part owner and principal playwright of the company.

Although the building was closed by the Puritans in 1642, and later pulled down, the works produced there have survived to enrich the world.

Courtesy of E.T. Archive Ltd.

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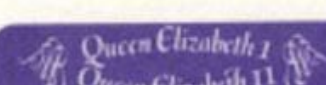
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3. The 'Golden Hinde'

In 1577 Sir Francis Drake, the great Elizabethan navigator, headed an expedition to the Pacific. His ship, the *Pelican*, the largest of the five, weighing 100 tons and carrying 18 guns and a crew of 80, was well equipped. It contained a forge, food for 18 months and the luxury of fiddlers for entertainment. On reaching the Magellan Straits Drake renamed his ship the *Golden Hinde* which was the crest of his patron, Christopher Hatton. After an amazing voyage of plunder and adventure during which the fleet became separated, Drake returned triumphant in 1580, loaded with treasure, the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe. Queen Elizabeth I knighted him on board the *Golden Hinde* and ordered that the ship be preserved at Deptford. Unfortunately, it was allowed to decay and survived only until 1689.

Courtesy of Colour Processing Laboratories Ltd.

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2. Mary, Queen of Scots 1542-1587

The great-granddaughter of Henry VII of England, Mary was crowned Queen of Scots in 1543 after the early death of her father, James V. In 1558, she married the future Francis II of France. Soon widowed, she returned to Scotland in 1560. In 1565 she married Lord Darnley and became entangled in the power struggles of the Scottish nobility. Darnley was murdered: Mary married Earl Bothwell, the man accused of the crime. Eventually she fled to England. As a Roman Catholic with a claim to the English throne, Mary was a threat. Elizabeth kept her imprisoned for 19 years, finally signing the death warrant after Mary was convicted of plotting to kill her. Famed for her beauty, she has remained a source of romantic legend.

Courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library

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1. Queen Elizabeth I 1558-1603

Elizabeth I was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. A brave, intelligent, strong-willed girl, the intrigues of court life and lessons in Latin, Greek, French and Italian prepared her well for the throne. As Queen, she firmly established the Church of England. Through refusing to marry a foreign prince, or indeed, anyone, she ensured her own and her country's independence. Her popularity was immense: she presented herself to her people in gorgeous dresses, her fine white skin covered in later years by thick make-up. She spoke with charm, wit and dignity, lavishing praise. In a masculine age, she was a most successful woman.

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10. St. Paul's Cathedral

St. Paul's was designed by Sir Christopher Wren to replace the old cathedral destroyed in the Great Fire. Constructed between 1675 and 1710, it was Wren's greatest achievement, and one of the finest Renaissance cathedrals in Europe. Its magnificent dome rivalled Michelangelo's of St. Peter's, Rome and provided an imposing landmark on London's skyline, rising above the picturesque spires, steeples and towers also designed by Wren. Many artists have captured this splendid view, none more richly than Canaletto in his painting of the Lord Mayor's Day of 1747.

Among the many illustrious people buried in St. Paul's are Nelson, Wellington and Wren himself.

Courtesy of Royle Publications Ltd.

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9. The Great Fire of London: 1666

The people of London had just recovered from the miseries of the Plague when the City suffered the greatest fire in its history. In September 1666 a fire started in the King's Bakery, Pudding Lane, spreading rapidly through the wooden buildings of the time. Fanned by strong winds, it raged for 3 days, destroying most of the city, including St. Paul's, yet very few people died. Fortunately the fire did not extend far south across London Bridge and the Thames provided a natural barrier and escape route for the thousands of homeless fleeing from the blaze.

Christopher Wren played an important part in rebuilding the City, designing St. Paul's, 52 churches and the Monument which commemorates the disaster.

Courtesy of Museum of London

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8. Charles II: 1649-1685

In May 1660, Charles II was restored to the throne amidst great public rejoicing. He returned this affection by giving the country peace after 20 years of upheaval. Eleven years in exile had made him cautious and cunning, a master of using deception for political advantage. These qualities helped him to defeat the attempt to exclude his Roman Catholic brother James from succeeding him, as he had no children by his Queen, Catherine. A witty, tolerant, pleasure-loving man, he encouraged poetry, painting, drama and music as well as the sciences. He was a fine horseman, frequently riding his own winners at Newmarket. When he died, his people were 'like ghosts, their faces suffused with tears'.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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7. The Battle of Marston Moor: 2 July 1644

Eight miles west of York, an 18,000-strong Royalist army commanded by Prince Rupert fought a joint Parliamentarian-Scottish army of 22,000 men under the Earl of Leven. Rupert's men were successful at first, driving one wing of the Parliamentarian cavalry off the battlefield. Two of Parliament's greatest soldiers, Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell, together led a cavalry attack which finally destroyed the hard-pressed Royalist soldiers who had been unable to follow up their initial success. Cromwell, on the white horse in this picture, had recruited and trained most of the victorious cavalry. 4,000 Royalists were killed to 300 Parliamentarian and Scots. Charles I lost control of the North of England.

Courtesy of The Cromwell Museum

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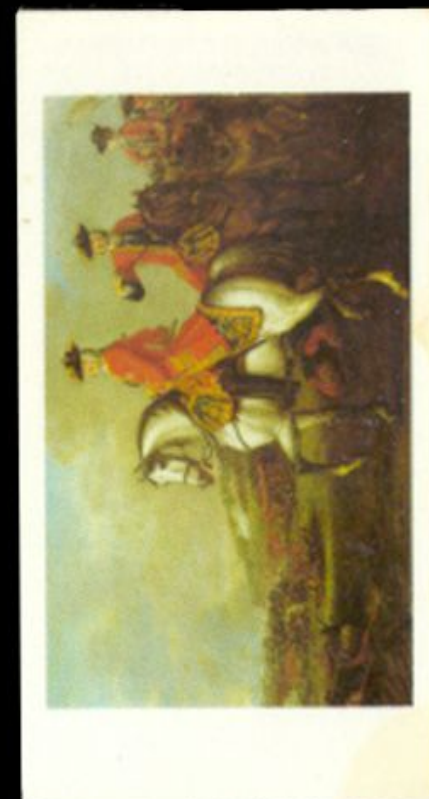
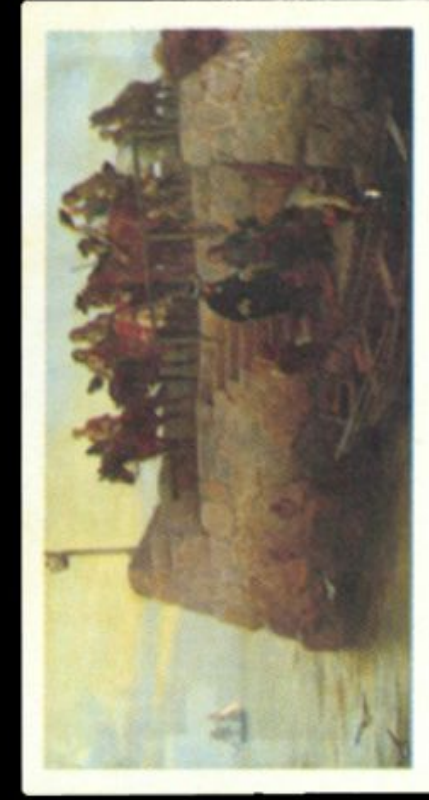
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6. The execution of Charles I 30 January 1649

Charles I was found guilty by Parliament of making war on his own people. He was beheaded outside Whitehall Palace, behaving with such dignity and courage that the legend of his martyrdom was assured. That morning he had put on two shirts, not wanting to shiver and be thought afraid. After an emotional farewell to his children, he walked calmly to his death. When the axe fell, a great groan arose from the spectators and some rushed forward to dip handkerchieves in his blood as tokens of remembrance. Thus died a brave king who had lost touch with the political realities of his time.

Courtesy of Forbes Magazine Collection, N.Y.

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15. Anne: 1703-1714

The younger daughter of James II, Anne became Queen on the death of William III, her sister Mary II's husband. She was steadfast in her support of the Church of England, ensuring that the crown would pass to protestant relations. Her happy marriage to George of Denmark was saddened by the early deaths of their six children. Not a clever woman, she relied heavily on the advice of her friend Sarah, the Duchess of Marlborough whose husband John won personal fame and national glory in the war against France. Tiring of the dominating Sarah, and encouraged by their political opponents, Anne eventually dismissed the Marlboroughs. She died, a friendless widow, the last of the Stuarts.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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14. James II fleeing after the Battle of the Boyne

In 1688 James II, having failed to impose his pro-Catholic policies, fled from England. He was replaced by the Protestant, William III. James, encouraged by Louis XIV of France, invaded Ireland. William retaliated, leading an army of 36,000 men. They met on 1st July 1690, between Dublin and Belfast, at the River Boyne. James, outnumbered, had fortified the South bank. William sent his Dutch guards across the river which was 4 feet deep and 60 yards wide. Under heavy fire, they attacked James's centre. Meanwhile, two outflanking forces, one led personally by William, put such pressure on James's army that it broke and fled, losing 1,500 men to William's 500. James escaped to France, his hopes in ruins.

Courtesy of the Tate Gallery, London

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13. Mary II: 1689-1694

She was the elder daughter of James II, who cursed her for agreeing to rule jointly with his replacement, William of Orange. Mary quietly supported her husband, providing a focus of English loyalty for those who found a Dutch king of England hard to stomach. On first seeing him she had burst into tears, so forbidding was his appearance, but their marriage was emotionally and politically successful. In William's absences in Holland, she skilfully handled affairs of state. When she died of smallpox, William said he had never known one single fault in her.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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12. William III: 1689-1702

Invited by a group of noblemen to replace the disastrous James II, William III ruled jointly with his wife, Mary II, until her death in 1694. Then, a grim and lonely widower, this reserved Dutchman was sole monarch. His life was dedicated primarily to the defence of Holland against Louis XIV's France, and secondly to the management of England. A sickly man, his will-power and obstinacy carried him through military defeats and political difficulties. His public face was chilling: silent, humourless and rude, winning respect but not love. In private, he could be emotional: when Mary died he wept passionately and fainted from grief.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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11. James II: 1685-1688

James II was the younger brother of Charles II. He was obstinate, narrow-minded and unimaginative. He admired the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV and was converted to Roman Catholicism in the 1670s. This led to the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-1681, an unsuccessful attempt to ban him from the throne. As King, his attempt to advance the Catholic religion angered everyone, including English Catholics who feared a back-lash would endanger their estates. A revolt led by the Duke of Monmouth in 1685 failed. In 1688, a group of noblemen invited William of Orange, his daughter's husband, to come and manage affairs. James II fled to France.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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20. George III: 1760-1820

George III succeeded his grandfather, George II; his father Frederick, Prince of Wales, having died in 1751. He, and his chosen Prime Minister, Lord North, were responsible, and took the blame, for the loss of the American colonies. By the mid-1780s, his reputation was recovering. He became more skilful at politics, and the nation appreciated his devotion to duty. The appalling behaviour of his son, the Prince of Wales, created much sympathy for him. George III suffered from porphyria, a disease affecting mental balance. He was, in effect, mad from 1812. The Prince of Wales ruled as 'Prince Regent'.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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19. George II: 1727-1760

At the Battle of Dettingen: 27 June 1743 George II is seen here commanding his troops in battle, the last occasion a British king did so. Dettingen was a muddle. Trapped between mountains and a river, with the cavalry receiving a fearful battering from French artillery, King George and his son, the Duke of Cumberland, struggled to form a line-of-battle. The French, however, delayed their attack. The King's horse bolted, but he struggled gallantly back on foot to lead his army in heavy fighting. Not for the first or last time, the British infantry's stubbornness overcame the mistakes of their commanders and the resistance of the enemy.

Courtesy of National Army Museum

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18. Sir Robert Walpole 1676-1745

From 1722-1742 Robert Walpole was the most powerful politician in the country. He owed his position to the strength of his character and intellect, and to the support of Queen Caroline, the intelligent and influential wife of George II. So dominating was his presence that power was said to ooze from him. Walpole was a brilliant organiser of people and made the slow machinery of 18th century government work. He was a short, dumpy man of 20 stone, who liked to appear as a country gentleman of simple tastes. He was, though, enormously wealthy with vast estates in Norfolk and a fine art collection. He is sometimes called 'the first Prime Minister'.

Courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library

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17. George I: 1714-1727

From 1698 George had been Elector, or ruler, of the small German state of Hanover. On Queen Anne's death his descent from James I and his protestant religion qualified him for the British throne. He continued to rule Hanover as well. He had divorced his wife in 1694, imprisoning her for 32 years for infidelity. He quarrelled with his son, the Prince of Wales, whose ability to understand English had helped his father at Council meetings. Unable even to bear his son interpreting for him, George I left more and more business to his ministers, particularly Robert Walpole. Thus, in his reign, cabinet government developed.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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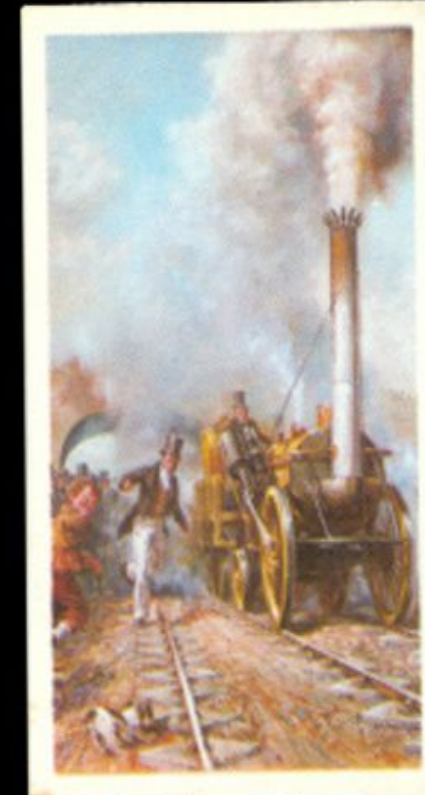
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16. The Battle of Blenheim 13 August 1704

The English and French armies, with their various allies, faced each other near the River Danube. Both armies were over 50,000 strong. The French, commanded by Marshal Tallard, were strongly positioned in Blenheim and other villages. The English commander, John, Duke of Marlborough, launched a ferocious attack on Blenheim. Panicking, the French crammed all their reserves into the already crowded village. The muddle became worse when the village caught fire. The French soon surrendered. Elsewhere on the battlefield, Marlborough's well-coordinated cavalry and infantry attacks also defeated the disorganized French. Marlborough lost 13,000 men, the French 20,000. This victory preserved the alliance against France.

Courtesy of National Army Museum

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25. The Rainhill Trials: 1829

In 1829 a contest was held at Rainhill to find the best locomotive for the new Liverpool and Manchester Railway. Four steam engines: George and Robert Stephenson's *Rocket*, Timothy Hackworth's *Savoy*, Braithwaite and Ericsson's *Novelty* and Timothy Burstall's *Perseverance* and one horse-powered vehicle called *Cycloped*, competed for the £500 prize. More than 10,000 people watched the event which was won by the *Rocket* reaching 32 mph. The Liverpool and Manchester Railway, officially opened in 1830 with the *Rocket* pulling the first train, provided the world's first public service for both passengers and goods. Following its success, railways expanded rapidly, transforming the landscape and economic structure of Victorian Britain; reigning supreme until the advent of the motor car.

Courtesy of Alan Fensley

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24. George IV: 1820-1830

He ruled as 'Prince Regent' from 1812, being crowned King on his mad father George III's death. By far the most capable of the Georges, he used his intelligence to hinder rather than help his ministers. Opposed to the granting of emancipation to Roman Catholics, he resisted all arguments, only giving in tearfully when civil war threatened in Ireland. He was deeply unpopular for his extravagant tastes and self-indulgent habits at a time of great poverty and distress. His marriage to Princess Caroline of Brunswick was a disaster, ending in a scandalous divorce case. The monarchy reached its lowest level of popularity during his reign.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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23. The Battle of Waterloo 18 June 1815

Napoleon Bonaparte assembled his army on the Franco-Belgian border. He aimed to destroy Wellington's Anglo-Dutch army and Blücher's Prussians before the rest of Europe could combine against him. On 18 June, Bonaparte with 72,000 men attacked Wellington's 67,000, placed defensively behind a low ridge across the Brussels road. Massed French infantry, wave after wave of splendid cavalry and even the famous Imperial Guard failed to break Wellington's line. The Prussians, defeated on 16 June, gallantly arrived to help during the afternoon, and the French, exhausted, outnumbered and soundly beaten, retreated leaving 25,000 casualties.

Courtesy of E.T. Archiva Ltd.

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22. The Duke of Wellington 1769-1852

'The Great Duke' was an unsuccessful schoolboy, sent into the army by disappointed parents. Through hard work, courage and influential friends he progressed rapidly. In India he learned the importance of supplies. As Army Commander during the Peninsular War, he began cautiously, winning defensive victories, collecting supplies and training his men. Once confident, he attacked and drove the French back over the Pyrenees. In 1815 he defeated Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo. He twice became Prime Minister during the next 37 years, but his direct manner and hatred of intrigue did not suit him to politics.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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21. The Battle of Trafalgar 21 October 1805

One of the greatest sea battles was fought at Trafalgar off the South-West coast of Spain between the British under Admiral Nelson and a combined French and Spanish fleet under Villeneuve. Although Britain's fleet of 27 numbered 5 less than the enemy, Nelson's brilliant leadership and unconventional tactics, combined with the superior seamanship and gunnery of his crews, ensured the virtual annihilation of the enemy fleet without a British ship lost. Tragically, Nelson was mortally wounded during the battle, and England lost a truly great hero. Nelson's victory at Trafalgar ended forever Napoleon's plans to invade Britain, and established British naval supremacy for more than 100 years.

Courtesy of Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

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30. Florence Nightingale 1820-1910

Named after her birthplace, Florence Nightingale chose to devote her life to nursing, despite the disapproval of her wealthy parents. After training abroad she left England in 1854 with 30 nurses to tend the wounded at Scutari Hospital in the Crimea. Her dedication and brilliant administration in reorganising the hospital system became legendary. Improvements in medical care, sanitation and diet dramatically reduced the death rate, and her personal devotion and nightly visits to comfort the soldiers earned her the affectionate name 'The Lady of the Lamp'.

She returned home a popular heroine and established the first modern nursing school in 1860, with funds raised in her honour. In 1907 she was awarded the Order of Merit for her outstanding contribution to nursing.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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29. The Great Exhibition: 1851

The first international exhibition of its kind was opened in Hyde Park in 1851 by Queen Victoria. The exhibition, initiated by Prince Albert, proved a triumphant success with nearly 6 million visitors marvelling at the latest inventions and exotic foreign goods. The vast iron-framed structure containing 300,000 panes of glass was romantically named the 'Crystal Palace'. Designed by Joseph Paxton, it was erected in record time by assembling prefabricated units on site. This new technique contributed to the development of the modern skyscraper. The building was later dismantled and moved to Sydenham, but was destroyed by fire in 1936.

Courtesy of The Guildhall, City of London

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28. Victoria: 1837-1901

She succeeded her uncle William IV in 1837, an inexperienced girl of 18. By 1901 she ruled a world-wide empire and her relations occupied the great thrones of Europe. During her reign, the British monarchy became the entirely respectable and deeply-cherished institution that it remains today. With her beloved husband, Prince Albert, she enjoyed a 20-year partnership in which domestic bliss was combined with stylish ceremonial and wise, detailed advice to the government. After Albert's death in 1861, she made few public appearances until her Golden Jubilee of 1887.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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27. William IV: 1830-1837

He became King on the death of his brother George IV. A sailor by training, he proved an eccentric but popular monarch. The power of the Crown was considerably reduced during his reign and the influence of Parliament increased by the Reform Act of 1832. He was the last British monarch personally to dismiss a government. He lacked interest in and the dignity for public ceremonial, and his blunt remarks often caused offence, or amusement. He restored some of the popularity of the monarchy after the low point of George IV's reign.

Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

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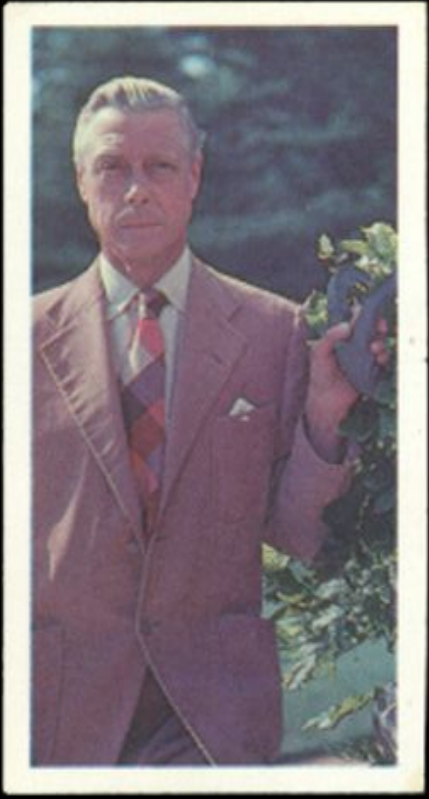
26. Brighton Pavilion

George, Prince of Wales, later to become King George IV, had resided in Brighton since 1786, attracted there by its fashionable, witty society. An artistic, extravagant man, he transformed his house into a Palladian villa, and on becoming Regent in 1811 he commissioned the celebrated architect, John Nash to create an Indian palace. This oriental fantasy with its exquisite pavilion roofs, pinnacles and minarets was unique in Europe. The exotic Chinese interior decorations and furniture were equally magnificent.

Twenty years after George's death, the Pavilion was purchased by the people of Brighton and is now restored to its former brilliance.

Courtesy of Royal Pavilion, Brighton

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35. Rolls-Royce

Acclaimed as the finest car developed since the advent of motoring, the Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost was produced in 1907, designed by Henry Royce, it was manufactured for 18 years. Rolls, a motor enthusiast of aristocratic birth, who imported foreign cars, and Royce, a brilliant engineer, created the company that has come to represent technical perfection, producing 39 models, including the Silver Shadow, Wraith, Corniche and Carmar. It is a testament to the quality of the 90,000 cars produced, that half are still on the road today, well deserving the reputation of 'the best car in the world'.

Courtesy of the National Motor Museum, Banbury

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34. Captain L. E. G. Oates 1880-1912

Lawrence Oates, an army officer seeking adventure, was a member of naval Captain Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated South Pole expedition of 1910-1912. Having reached the Pole - a month later than Amundsen's Norwegians - Scott's party struggled back against foul weather, injuries and malnutrition. Their painful progress was recorded by Scott in the diary found by his body. Oates, severely frostbitten, walked out of the tent saying 'I am just going outside and may be some time'. He never returned and Scott wrote 'We knew that poor Oates was walking to his death, but though we tried to dissuade him, we knew it was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman'. The last entry was on 29 March 1912: 'For God's sake look after our people'.

Courtesy of the Cavalry & Guards Club, London

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33. Edward VII: 1901-1910

At the age of 60, he succeeded his mother Queen Victoria. Given a strict education, he disappointed his formidable parents by learning little. He was not allowed to take part in affairs of state when Prince of Wales. He became the leader of late-Victorian high society, being a man of great charm and energy. As king, he revived the splendid public ceremonial of the monarchy, and made several successful foreign tours, winning the affection of the French at a difficult time. His warmth and humanity greatly increased the popularity of the monarchy.

Courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library

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32. The 'Cutty Sark'

This beautiful 3-masted clipper weighing 963 tons with a sail area of 32,000 sq. ft. was built in 1869 for the China tea run. The name meaning 'short shirt' comes from a Burns' poem, and the ship's figurehead is based on the witch 'Nannie' who wore the garment.

Competition from steamships following the opening of the Suez Canal forced the Cutty Sark into the Australian wool trade where she proved the fastest ship, 1885-1895. From 1936 she served as a training ship and in 1957, fully restored, was moved to Greenwich, the sole surviving clipper of the golden age of sail.

Courtesy of The Cutty Sark Society

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31. The 'Great Eastern'

The Great Eastern was the wonder and failure of her age. Launched in 1858, she was the largest and most luxurious steamship in the world, boasting 5 funnels, 6 masts, 2 paddle wheels and a screw propeller. As her name suggests, her designer, Brunel, intended her for the long route east to Australia; but, employed instead on the Atlantic crossing, she proved unprofitable, unable to fill her 4,000 expensive berths. She was modified into a 'working' vessel and gained success by laying the first transatlantic telegraph cable in 1865 as this picture shows.

Conceived ahead of her time, the Great Eastern was a forerunner of the modern liner, and prophetically, like some who followed, was to end her days as a showboat.

Courtesy of National Maritime Museum

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40. Edward VIII: Jan-Dec 1936

He was the eldest son of George V and, as Prince of Wales, a dazzling success. Courageous during World War I, his sincere concern for the underprivileged, successful tours and charm and good looks presented a new style of popular royalty. On becoming king, he stated his impossible desire to marry Wallis Simpson, a twice-divorced American. The King, as 'Defender of the Faith', could not marry a divorcee. He chose personal happiness rather than royal duty, and abdicated in favour of his brother George VI. He married Wallis and they were granted the titles Duke and Duchess of Windsor. He died in 1972 and was buried at Frogmore, near Windsor.

Courtesy of Paul Popper Ltd.

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39. Sir Alexander Fleming: 1881-1955

In 1928 Alexander Fleming, Professor of Bacteriology at St. Mary's Hospital, London, achieved his ambition to find a substance which could destroy bacteria without harming body cells. His accidental discovery that a mould, which had settled on a specimen dish killed germs, was to prove one of the most valuable contributions to medical science. Fleming named his discovery 'penicillin', from the Latin word 'paintbrush', because of the mould's brush-like composition, but it took 12 years and the assistance of Howard Florey and Ernst Chain to perfect this 'miracle' drug. Penicillin, the world's first antibiotic proved effective against a wide range of human diseases, and has saved thousands of lives. In 1945, Fleming, Florey and Chain received the Nobel Prize for Medicine.

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38. Suffragettes

The campaign to secure 'Votes for Women' was led by Emmeline Pankhurst, founder of the 'Women's Social and Political Union' in 1903. The 'Suffragettes' as they became known, arranged mass meetings and protest marches, and from 1906 they resorted increasingly to militant action, enduring imprisonment and forcible feeding to attract attention to the women's cause. The movement was called off in 1914 at the outbreak of war, during which many women demonstrated their equality by contributing to the war effort. In 1918 women over 30 were given the vote, and the following year Nancy Astor became the first woman MP. Voting equality with men was established in 1928 just before Mrs. Pankhurst's death.

Courtesy of E.T. Archive Ltd.

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37. The First World War 1914-1918

900,000 British soldiers died, three times as many as in World War II. Machine-guns and quick-firing rifles, fired from trenches and supported by artillery, destroyed waves of attacking foot-soldiers. By 1915, the war was a stalemate along a line stretching from the Swiss border to the Channel coast. Despite thousands of volunteers, by 1916 compulsory military service was necessary to fill the ranks. The war became a trial of industrial strength, with women taking factory jobs. In 1918, the German Army broke through, but, exhausted, it was pushed back to defeat by the British, French and Americans.

Courtesy of E.T. Archive Ltd.

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36. George V: 1910-1935

The early death of his elder brother led George, Duke of York, to succeed his father Edward VII as king, cutting short a much-enjoyed naval career. During World War I, George V's deep concern for soldiers and sailors won the respect of his subjects. He also changed the Royal Family's name to Windsor. After the war the many visits he and the Prince of Wales made to the country and Empire, helped to strengthen the links between monarchy and people. As other European monarchies disappeared, the British Royal Family became a symbol of continuity, at the same time losing political influence.

Courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library

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45. The first ascent of Everest
29 May 1953

The conquest of Mount Everest (29,028 feet) by a British team was announced on the morning of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, 2 June 1953. This success was due to excellent, detailed preparatory planning by Colonel John Hunt and his firm, inspiring leadership on the mountain; to the strength, fitness and skill of the two men who reached the summit, the New Zealander Edmund Hillary and the Nepalese Sherpa Tenzing Norgay; and to the unselfish support of the other 12 team members and sherpas.

Photograph: Alfred Gregory

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44. Queen Elizabeth II
1952-

She succeeded her father, George VI. Her Silver Jubilee in 1977 was a tribute to her popularity. Supported by her husband, Prince Philip, she has adapted the monarchy to the modern age, introducing more informality by walk-arounds and TV appearances, but without losing dignity. She has broadened the appeal of the Royal Family by encouraging its different members to share public duties. At leisure, she is happiest in the country surrounded by horses and dogs. She has an international reputation as a horse-breeding expert.

Photograph: Reginald Davis

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43. The Spitfire

The Spitfire, the most famous fighter 'plane of aviation history, played a critical part in the struggle for survival during the Second World War. Built by Supermarine and powered by a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, the Spitfire came into service in 1938. Its virtues of excellent manoeuvrability, good climb and a tight turn at speed were decisive factors in the heroic fight against the invading aircraft of the Luftwaffe, during the Battle of Britain in 1940. The Spitfires and Hurricanes of the Royal Air Force emerged victorious, having shot down 1,243 German aircraft, at the cost of 721 British. Continually developed and refined, more than 20,000 Spitfires were produced. Finally retired from service in 1954, only a handful of these legendary aircraft survive.

Courtesy of the RAF Museum, Hendon

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42. Sir Winston Leonard
Spencer Churchill: 1874-1965

Artist, writer, soldier, politician, Churchill was to emerge a great national leader and world statesman. He entered Parliament in 1900 after distinguishing himself as a soldier and war correspondent in the Boer War. During his long political career, spanning 55 years, he held many government posts, but he is best remembered for his resolute leadership as Prime Minister during the Second World War. His brilliant administration, great oratory and unflinching optimism brought Britain from the brink of defeat to victory against Nazi Germany. He modestly claimed that 'it was the nation that had the lion's heart' and that he had the luck to be called upon to give the 'roar'. Honoured with a knighthood in 1953 and the Nobel Prize for Literature, he was revered throughout the world.

Courtesy of Paul Popper Ltd.

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41. George VI & Queen Elizabeth
(1936-1952)

Albert, Duke of York, married Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon in 1923. Until 1936 they lived a quiet family life, with two daughters, the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret Rose. The Abdication of Edward VIII thrust the quiet, modest Duke of York onto the throne. Throughout World War II, with total dedication, they gave hope and reassurance to a battered nation, visiting factories and bombed cities. The King toured battle areas to encourage the forces. Since his death, the Queen Mother has continued to brighten public affairs with her charm, humour and ability to make ordinary people feel important.

Courtesy of Paul Popper Ltd.

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50. The Prince and Princess of Wales
(b. 1948) (b. 1961)

Prince Charles is the eldest child of Queen Elizabeth II, and the heir to the throne. After being the first royal prince to go away to school, he took a degree at Cambridge University and trained in the services, achieving command of his own ship. He is a humorous, cultured, concerned prince, dedicated to his people's service. On 29 July 1981 he married Lady Diana Spencer at St. Paul's Cathedral - an occasion of fairy-tale romance and nostalgic pageantry. The Princess of Wales is loved for her natural friendliness and admired for her dignity under public scrutiny. Their first child, Prince William Arthur Philip Louis, born on 21 June 1982, is second in line to the throne. This picture shows the first public appearance of the Prince, just twenty-four hours old.

Courtesy of Colour Library International Ltd.

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49. Transglobe Expedition: 1979-1982

This historic journey around the world from Pole to Pole passed through jungles, deserts and mountains, across oceans and the frozen polar wastes. It took seven years of planning and three years to accomplish. Driving snowmobiles over 11,000-foot Antarctic mountains with temperatures below minus 100°F and landrovers across burning deserts in temperatures above 120°F, Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Charlie Burton became the first two people ever to stand upon both Poles, having travelled across the surface of the earth. This picture shows their arrival at the North Pole on Easter Day 1982. Apart from the personal triumph, the expedition, under royal patronage, was a great team effort by all the 24 members who provided vital air and sea support and carried out many scientific studies.

Courtesy of Transglobe Expedition

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48. Concorde

The world's first supersonic airliner began service in January 1976, with the simultaneous flights of a British Concorde to Bahrain, and a French Concorde to Rio de Janeiro. The ambitious technical development project started in 1961 with a British and French Government Agreement. Rolls Royce powered, and spanning 83 feet, Concorde carries up to 128 passengers at twice the speed of sound (Mach 2), halving standard flight times. The Concorde fleet has now safely carried more than 810,000 passengers. Built by British Aerospace, and the French Aerospatiale, Concorde is widely acclaimed as the most exciting and beautiful aircraft ever built.

Photograph: British Airways

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47. The Beatles

The Beatles will almost certainly be remembered as the most successful pop group of all time. John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr leapt to fame in the early sixties and became a legend in their own lifetime. Their style and personality captured world-wide appeal and induced 'Beatlemania' wherever they appeared. Initially inspired by Rhythm and Blues and early rock, the unique partnership of Lennon and McCartney produced an impressive variety of songs ranging from haunting ballads like *Yesterday* to the revolutionary album *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

The pressure of fame and growing outside interests led to the group's break-up in 1971, and Lennon's murder in 1980 ended forever any possibility of a 'come-back'.

Courtesy of Paul Popper Ltd.

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46. Sir Francis Chichester
1901-1972

Chichester's adventurous spirit was demonstrated early in his life by his solo flight to Australia in 1929 in a Gipsy Moth. In 1960 he won the first solo transatlantic yacht race in *Gipsy Moth III*, and in 1967, aged 65, became the first Englishman to sail single-handed round the world. In *Gipsy Moth IV*, he achieved the fastest circumnavigation in a small craft with one port of call, taking 226 days to complete 29,630 miles.

He was knighted at Greenwich by Queen Elizabeth II with the sword used by Elizabeth I to knight Francis Drake, the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe almost 400 years before.

Courtesy of Paul Popper Ltd.

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